

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 08197 141802Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 FRB-01 H-02 INR-10 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 CTME-00 AID-05 SS-15 STR-07
ITC-01 TRSE-00 USIA-15 SP-02 SOE-02 OMB-01 DOE-11
/111 W

-----104850 150351Z /64

R 141546Z MAR 78 ZFD
FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6655
INFO USDOC WASHDC
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

UNCLAS CAIRO 08197

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EG
SUBJ: EGYPTIAN IMPORT POLICY

1. ARTICLE IN CAIRO DAILY AL GUMHURIYYA MARCH 14
REPORTED THAT, EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 1978, GOE WILL "SUSPEND"
ISSUANCE OF LICENSES FOR IMPORTATION OF 81 COMMODITIES
WHICH ARE LOCALLY PRODUCED OR SUBSTANTIAL STOCKS OF WHICH
ALREADY EXIST IN EGYPT. COMMODITIES AFFECTED INCLUDE
CERTAIN TEXTILE RAW MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS, TIRES,
TELEPHONE CABLES, TRACTORS, MATCHES, PETROLEUM COKE,
TOOTHPASTES, MAKE-UP, AND PERFUMES.

2. COMMENT: NEWS ARTICLE LACKS DETAIL, AND WE ARE
SEEKING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THROUGH MINTRADE SOURCES.
REPORTED MINTRADE ACTION, HOWEVER, FITS PATTERN OF RECENT
INDICATIONS THAT GOE IS MOVING TO IMPOSE NEW RESTRICTIONS
ON IMPORTS. FOR EXAMPLE, MINISTER OF TRADE ZAKARIA
TEWFIK ABDEL FATTAH WAS QUOTED IN MARCH 12 CAIRO PRESS
AS INDICATING THAT GOE INTENDED ENCOURAGE DOMESTIC IN-
DUSTRY BY LIMITING IMPORTS OF GOODS WHICH HAVE LOCALLY-
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PRODUCED EQUIVALENTS.

3. UNTIL GOE LIBERALIZED ITS TRADE AND ECONOMIC
REGULATIONS, BEGINNING IN 1974, IMPORTS WERE LIMITED BY
FACT THAT VIRTUALLY ALL IMPORTATION WAS IN HANDS OF GOE
AGENCIES, AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE WAS IN SHORT SUPPLY.
RECENT CHANGES IN LEGISLATION, HOWEVER, HAVE BROKEN

GOVERNMENTAL IMPORT MONOPOLY AND HAVE GIVEN ACCESS, THROUGH OWN-EXCHANGE IMPORT SYSTEM, TO PRIVATELY-HELD SOURCES OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE. AT PRESENT, EGYPT PROBABLY HAS ONE OF LEAST RESTRICTIVE IMPORT POLICIES AMONG THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. RESULT HAS BEEN FLOOD OF IMPORTS, MANY OF WHICH COMPETE WITH LOCALLY-PRODUCED GOODS.

4. WE WILL CONTINUE REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS AREA AS THEY MAY AFFECT U.S. IMPORTS. ALTHOUGH BULK OF CURRENT U.S. IMPORTS PROBABLY DO NOT HAVE LOCALLY-PRODUCED EQUIVALENTS, FUTURE COURSE OF TRADE COULD BE ALTERED BY NEW GOE POLICY. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXTILES, COMMODITIES, IMPORT CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CAIRO08197
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780114-0549
Format: TEL
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780373/aaaacjiv.tel
Line Count: 74
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 50f5f5c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3345089
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EGYPTIAN IMPORT POLICY
TAGS: ETRD, EG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/50f5f5c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014